

Dear Chairman Liabe and members of the Committee:

I am here as a parent and concerned citizen to support SB 69 and SB 70. Thank you for your service to our state and for your time.

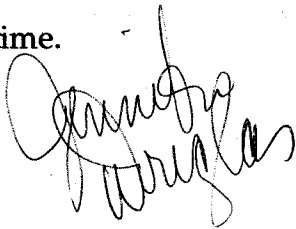
I have two children: a son in middle school and a daughter in high school. My kids are bright and high achieving. The programs they need to continue to achieve on the highest academic level are often the very ones threatened or cut by shortfalls. It is disheartening to see budget deficits year after year in our school district; budget restrictions that directly affect the district's ability to meet my children's needs in math and science because there often is not enough staff or resources to offer advanced sections.

I have one big idea on how to trim waste and cut expenses.....stop making it necessary to cut the budget - know that we are down to the bare bones now and this minimum must, at least, be maintained; make sure education gets the same percentage of the state budget as all other agencies. The biggest waste I see are the hours and hours of time our administrators and teachers spend trying to figure out how to cover the budget shortfall each year. I would love to see an accounting of the amount of time spent strategizing - always resulting in cuts to programs, staff and materials. It is time that these skilled and dedicated people be empowered to put their efforts towards BUILDING programs and deepening and broadening our student's knowledge, instead of constantly shrinking programs, cutting corners and lowering expectations because of funding shortages.

Please show your support for our future by giving public education the very highest funding you are able to this year and work to guarantee public education equity in funding with all other state agencies. This year, to maintain status quo, we should be at a 5% increase. Please SUPPORT education, RESPECT our children and teachers, and INVEST in the future of our state and country.....build educational infrastructure now.....it is our highest priority. Please vote for SB 69 and 70. They do not provide the increase in State Aid that the schools need to maintain status quo but they do take a positive step in that direction.

Thank you for your time.

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